

Meeting Minutes – July 28, 2022

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF OMAHA

2222 Cuming Street

Omaha, Nebraska, 68102

JULY 28, 2022

MINUTES

The Transit Authority of the City of Omaha Board met in Regular Session on Thursday, July 28, 2022, at 8:30 a.m., in person at the Authority's Administration Building, 2222 Cuming Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102, and virtually due to COVID-19. Notice was given in advance of the meeting by publication in the Omaha World Herald. For the benefit of the public in attendance, a copy of the Open Meetings Law is posted in the meeting room and the Agenda is published on the display in the facility lobby. The following persons were in attendance at the meeting:

Authority Board:

Ms. Amy Haase, Chair

Mr. Othello Meadows, Vice Chair

Mr. Jay Lund

Mr. Daniel Lawse

Ms. Julia Plucker (Absent)

Authority Staff:

L. Cencic, CEO/Executive Director

I. Maldonado, Deputy Executive Officer

D. Grant, HR Director

E. Simpson, Legal Director

K. Pendland, IT Director

W. Clingman, Finance Director

D. Kelsey, Operations Director

J. Willoughby, Senior Project Manager (Absent)

J. Rumery, Grant Administrator

Others Present:

Other Metro staff

Members of the public

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Agenda Item #1: Call to order

Ms. Haase called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m. For the benefit of the public in attendance, a copy of the Open Meetings Law has been posted in the meeting room and is available online at ometro.com, and the agenda was published on the display in the facility lobby.

Agenda Item #2a: Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

Ms. Haase entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the Board Meeting on June 23, 2022.

Motion by Mr. Lawse; Second by Mr. Lund

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

Agenda Item #3: General Public Comment Period

Ms. Haase opened the General Public Comment Period to invite members of the audience to be heard regarding regular topics related to the Transit Authority of the City of Omaha. No members of the public came forward to comment.

Agenda Item #4: Administrative Report

(L. Cencic)

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that Metro is currently seeing a resurgence of COVID cases and exposures. Currently, approximately 20 staff members are out of the office, either having tested positive or having been exposed and are waiting during the quarantine period. This is something Metro is taking very seriously and doing everything possible to mitigate any major outbreaks. This has not yet affected Metro's service pull-out but these numbers could pose a risk to that moving forward.

Ms. Cencic updated the Board that Metro staff has started working on the annual budget process, which will be done differently this year. Historically, with the tax levy and preliminary budget, Metro has presented preliminary information to the Board in July with the final tax levy presented to in August and the final budget presented in December. This year, Metro is trying to bring all information to the Board in September so that everything can be looked at together. This relates to the recent conversion to a regional, municipal transit authority. Under this process, because Metro will be directly levying the property tax rate, it does not need to be submitted first to the city or the county. This gives Metro a little more time to prepare the information to present to the Board.

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that on July 1st, which was the opening of the Gene Leahy Mall, Metro opened the ORBT station at 8th & Farnam. Ms. Cencic is happy to report that this day had very high ridership with over 11,000 riders, which was 24% higher than the average ridership reported on a Friday. This is also the single highest day of ridership in approximately 2 years.

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Ms. Cencic shared with the Board that Metro is working with Omaha by Design on their Open Omaha event which will take place August 6th-7th. The event will look at different sites throughout the Omaha region that have unique, historical, architectural, or cultural significance. As a part of that event, participants will be able to ride Metro buses for free to get to the different sites on the tour.

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that staff has been working very closely with the Omaha Streetcar Authority as well as with the City of Omaha on looking at the preliminary design for the streetcar, including looking at the alignment of the streetcar overall, in terms of making any refinements that need to be made from the Advanced Conceptual Engineering Alignment. Overall, the streetcar is still going from UNMC into downtown but really looking at how it uses Farnam and Harney along the various portions of the corridor as well as some alternatives for different locations at the end of the line.

Ms. Cencic shared with the Board that next week, Metro is expecting to receive the 90% design engineering plans on the Facility Sustainability Project. Metro still hopes to get this project into construction by the end of this year. There is a lot of indoor work as a part of that project so Metro is hoping to be able to have that work completed over the winter. Staff is excited to see the design set from the engineers next week.

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that Metro has submitted a grant request for additional funding to continue the K-12 Rides Free program. This program has been incredibly successful, and Metro has seen an incredible amount of student ridership in this program so Metro is very anxious to continue it. During the 2021-2022 school year, Metro provided over 157,000 rides under this program, which was 86% higher than our pre-COVID student ridership. Metro hopes to hear about this grant request in August.

Lastly, Ms. Cencic shared with the Board that this week and next week, Metro is having All-Hands Staff Meetings. Metro is meeting with all staff from all departments to discuss various topics. These meetings are held 1-2 times per year. Right now, the meetings include a number of important topics including the conversion to a regional transit authority, MetroNEXT, the streetcar's impact on Metro, safety, and other project updates. These meetings are a chance for two-way conversations and questions and answers among staff. Ms. Cencic appreciates staff participating in these meetings.

Discussion was had.

Agenda Item #5a: Administrative Reports

(D. Grant)

In the month of July, 30 individuals started new roles at Metro. Four of those 30 are Operators who have been promoted into supervisory roles. Metro also had 2 Mechanic Helpers promoted into Mechanic 3 and Tire Specialist roles.

Mr. Grant thanked all of the helping hands in Metro's training and onboarding functions. These staff members have been really busy as Metro had 17 bus operators and 3 paratransit operators start in the month of July.

Metro also has a new addition to the HR team. On Monday, Ms. Fears started as Metro's Senior Engagement & Experience Specialist. Ms. Fears will help Metro deliver on several of its culture, engagement, and talent development initiatives.

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Discussion was had.

Agenda Item #5b: Administrative Reports

(I. Maldonado)

Since the last Board meeting, Metro's team has focused on the training of new operators and mechanics, and on planning for the graduate increase of services. Metro held two Operator graduations and has selected 3 Operators who as of Monday will be promoted to Transit Field Supervisors. This is a key position in transit. Metro has not had these positions but adding them will make us a lot more efficient in field operations. This is a newly created position that will focus on field support to Operators, customer assistance, and route performance oversight.

Last Friday during the Omaha Memorial Park Celebrate America event, Metro worked very closely with the Omaha Police Department to minimize the disruption of ORBT services resulting from the temporary closure of Dodge from 52nd to 72nd Streets. Previously all routes were detoured which caused a lot of issues for folks trying to attend the event. This year, Metro was able to pre-stage four ORBT buses at the 62nd and Dodge stations, two heading westbound and two heading eastbound, prior to road closures. Metro also placed three buses on a temporary detour. Metro staff did a fantastic job encouraging participants to use ORBT, and as a result Metro had hundreds of customers use the service to attend this event. Thanks to the communications team and everyone else who organized this. It was a very successful event. Metro placed staff at the 62nd & Dodge stations to assist customers with boarding, safety, and anything else that was necessary. After the event, Metro received many positive comments and compliments because of the initiative to ease commuting to the event.

Metro held an employee safety meeting and coordinated with the Union to identify frontline personnel to serve as members of Metro's Safety Committee. Metro also conducted annual performance reviews of all administrative staff. Mr. Maldonado participated in two Employee Pension Committee meetings and two MAPA committee meetings as well.

On September 25, 2022, Metro will be enhancing a few routes by adding six additional buses in service and will try to continue to do that quarterly to reach pre-COVID level service, as soon as buses are in order and Metro has adequate personnel. On weekdays, Metro will restore 20-minute frequency on Route 3, 15-minute frequency on Route 24, 30-minute frequency on Routes 26, 35 and 36, and 15-minute frequency from Aksarben Transit Center to downtown. On Saturdays, Metro will restore 15-minute frequency on Route 15 and 20-minute frequency on Route 24. And on Sundays, Metro will add a 20-minute daytime frequency to Route 18. Metro will also make further adjustments to the system to make it more efficient and to provide better service to customers.

Discussion was had.

Agenda Item #5c: Administrative Reports

(N. Ebat)

Ms. Ebat informed the Board that June has been a busy media month for Metro. All social media platforms saw steady growth that is continuing throughout the year. Earned media saw 42 stories in 20 different outlets for just June. Between January and June, this quadruples the amount of earned media seen over 2021. Metro saw a lot of

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interest in the Bike to Work information with questions on how that worked. Interest was also helped with Metro's partnership between the ORBT stations and the Heartland Bikeshare plus the CWS circulators.

This interest continued quite a bit into the Memorial Park Concert. On the evening of the concert, between 6 pm and midnight, Metro's ridership doubled within those few hours when compared to the previous Friday. Metro saw a lot of positive social media and heard a lot from first-time riders who said this positive experience would lead to them riding the bus again in the future. Metro focused on earned and organic media but also focused on working with the organizers to make sure that Metro was included in all parking plans and information about how to get to and from the concert. Metro also made sure that the messaging went out to neighborhoods that surround Memorial Park, particularly those who were affected by increased traffic and heavy parking. This information was sent out to the neighborhood associations.

Overall, this continues the push to remind people that using public transit does not have to be an all-or-nothing thing. Riders can use it to replace one trip here and there, use it for fun, use it to go to the grocery store, or use it for work. The communications team is working on helping people understand how they can fit public transit into their everyday lives. This type of positive feedback is something Metro also saw for the grand opening of the Gene Leahy Mall. Some riders said that the reason they hopped on ORBT for the first time was for this grand opening event and their positive experience has prompted them to look at using public transit again.

Discussion was had.

Agenda Item #6: Resolution #426: Continuity of Business in Conversion the Transit Authority of the City of Omaha, dba Metro, to the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha

(E. Simpson)

Pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statutes §§18-1801 to 18-1825, known and cited as the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority Act, the Transit Authority of the City of Omaha, dba Metro, converted to a regional metropolitan transit authority with an affirmative vote of its Board of Directors. August 1, 2022 shall be the effective date of the conversion, and the Transit Authority of the City of Omaha, dba Metro, shall remain a body corporate and politic and a governmental subdivision of the State of Nebraska, but thereafter shall be known as the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha.

In an effort to continue and maintain the continuity of the business operations of public transit upon the effective date of conversion, staff requests the Board of Directors to reaffirm all such acts and transactions undertaken as the Transit Authority of the City of Omaha, dba Metro, in performing its public and essential governmental functions in the exercise of powers conferred upon it, and reaffirm its previously adopted resolutions, plans, programs, policies, rules, regulations, and rates, fares and charges for transportation as the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha, in performing its public and essential governmental functions in the exercise of powers conferred upon it by the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority Act via an affirmative majority vote.

Discussion was had.

Motion by Mr. Lund; Second by Mr. Meadows

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

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Agenda Item #7: Request Approval to Award Contract to Tyler Technologies for Finance and Human Resources Software Package

(W. Clingman)

Staff is seeking approval to award a contract to Tyler Technologies in an amount not to exceed \$798,504 over the next 3 years for the purchase of an integrated software package that will replace the existing general accounting and payroll software. It will also add additional functionality for the Finance and Human Resources departments and move some processes within these departments to paperless processing.

This procurement will be paid for with 80% federal 5339 funds. The local match funds for this project will not exceed \$159,700.80.

This item will be reviewed with the Procurement Committee prior to the Board Meeting and is recommended for approval.

Discussion was had.

Motion by Mr. Lund; Second by Mr. Meadows

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

Agenda Item #8: Request Approval of Fuel Contract

(L. Cencic)

On July 21, 2022, Metro determined that it was prudent to obtain bids for diesel fuel due to a decrease in fuel prices for a 6-month period beginning on September 1, 2022.

This fuel contract is for a biodiesel blend of 20% for the month of September and 5% for the period of October 1, 2022 through February 28, 2023. Metro will receive a rebate of \$0.50/gallon for the 20% blend from the Nebraska Soybean Board.

Metro received two bids for this contract. The low responsive, compliant bid was from Sapp Bros Petroleum, Inc at \$3.3793 per gallon, including freight for 195,000 gallons. The CEO/Executive Director advised the Board Chair, Ms. Haase, who agreed with the approval of the contract to Sapp Bros Petroleum, Inc.

We are requesting full Board concurrence for a contract award to Sapp Bros Petroleum, Inc. in the amount of \$658,963.50 for the diesel purchase.

Sapp Bros Petroleum, Inc. is paid upon invoicing after delivery, which is spread out incrementally throughout the contract period.

Recommend full Board approval.

Discussion was had.

Motion by Mr. Meadows; Second by Mr. Lund

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

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Agenda Item #9: Board Chair Report

(A. Haase)

Ms. Haase shared with the Board that the Policy & Planning Committee did not meet this month. Mr. Meadows shared that the Finance Committee did not meet but has a lot of work coming up. Mr. Lawse shared that the Operations Committee did not meet either.

Agenda Item #10: Date, Time and Place of Next Board Meeting

Thursday, August 25, 2022, at 8:30 a.m. to be held at Metro Transit Authority’s Administrative Building.

Agenda Item #11: Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion was entertained to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

Motion by Mr. Meadows; Second by Mr. Lund

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

Ms. Amy Haase – Chair

Recording Secretary